

Widespread opposition to UAW sellout to end strike of Eaton aerospace workers in Michigan

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The United Auto Workers has announced a tentative agreement (TA) for 525 Eaton aerospace workers in Jackson, Michigan, who have been on strike for more than four weeks. Voting takes place on Thursday.

The deal is a sellout, with no changes to the previous two that were rejected. According to Eaton workers, the contract does not address their main demands, including full pensions for all workers, the end of the tier system and the reduced out-of-pocket healthcare costs.

The deal was produced through government mediation, much as the new contract offer at Boeing was brokered by acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su which workers overwhelmingly voted down on Wednesday. Eaton workers produce components used by Boeing. The government is determined to shut down the strikes across the aerospace industry, which jeopardize war production as the US stands on the brink of an unpopular war with Iran.

The TA was announced to deliberately isolate workers from a growing strike wave across the world, including at Eaton specifically. On Monday, 400 workers in Troy and Highland, Illinois, began their strike. Workers under IAM Local 600, part of the B-Line facilities making aerospace and utilities components like their Jackson coworkers, rejected a tentative agreement by 266 to 22. This includes a poverty 3 percent wage increase with an additional raise in January and October of 2025.

Striking Eaton workers in Fareham, England, who also make components for military and commercial aircraft, have launched a strike. Much like their American counterparts, the Unite union in Britain is starving workers on £250 per week in strike pay. Eaton

has offered an insulting 10.5 percent pay increase over three years.

As with the International Association of Machinists' decision to not formally endorse the new Boeing deal, which workers voted on Wednesday, UAW Local 475 President Donnie Huffman is trying to wash his hands of the deal, effectively casting blame on the rank and file if the contract is approved under economic duress.

However, it was the UAW bureaucracy that brought all three sellout TAs to a vote and has kept the workers on starvation strike pay at \$500 a week before taxes. UAW President Shawn Fain has kept his six-figure salary, while striking workers have been given crumbs from the \$825 million UAW strike fund.

For a month, the union subjected workers to an information blackout, until the Local 475 bargaining committee announced federal mediation next week.

The twin sellouts at Boeing and Eaton, as well as the snap vote over the weekend to shut down the Textron Aviation strike in Wichita, Kansas, show that workers are in a fight not just against management but against the union bureaucracy and the White House. They must organize independently of the union apparatus, linking up with workers across the industry and the world through rank-and-file committees controlled by workers themselves.

Workers spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* yesterday responding to the latest tentative agreement as they went into an informational meeting Wednesday. "The contract is crap," one worker said. "What was the point of being on strike all this time if we go back now without gaining anything? Why did my friend Seth lose his life?," referring to Seth Webb, who was killed in a tragic vehicle accident on the picket line. "Why is Kyle

still in the hospital?”

A young worker stated, “It’s going to be a no vote tomorrow. It’s the same contract. They changed a couple things; for the third time we get one contract.”

Responding to the WSWS’s call for unity with striking Eaton workers in Britain, replied, “We should! Right now, we don’t have the specific [copy] but the bargaining committee is supposed to tell us during the meeting.” A more experienced worker said, “Eaton is playing a shell game right now, from what I have heard. Not offering any more [money], just moving it around and not budging on the pension.

“I know about the England strike as well,” he continued. “I think the whole world is on strike.”

Workers are up against a company that operates globally with 90,000 workers. It and other aerospace contractors have profited off of expanding wars against Russia and in the Middle East, which Eaton is using to enrich its Wall Street owners through between \$1.5 and \$2.5 billion in share buybacks this year.

As the corporate elite is lining up behind Eaton, as well as Boeing, the working class all over the world must unite behind the strikers. To accomplish this, workers must organize independently of the bureaucracy by forming rank-and-file strike committees, connecting the fight to unite the working class with the fight for democratic control over the strike.

As the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee declared in a statement this week:

If anything has been proven over the past month, it is that the chief obstacle to our unity is the dictatorship of the bureaucracy in the unions. We have to connect a broad appeal with a rank-and-file rebellion to transfer power from the apparatus to workers ourselves.

A committee at Eaton would raise key demands, including:

? Rank-and-file control over all contract talks, with all sessions livestreamed and overseen by rank-and-file workers;

? A contract with full pensions and medical benefits for all workers and retirees, and an end to management-

dictated tiers, and;

? Increase the strike pay to at least \$750 a week for all workers. The \$820 million strike fund, financed by the dues of the rank and file, must be used to sustain workers for this critical battle, not to fund the lavish lifestyles of the UAW bureaucrats.



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